

NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

by Florence Turcotte



Flo Turcotte and Ellen Giallonardo at the January trustees meeting at the Yearling Restaurant, Cross Creek

MKR Society Trustee Emeritus David Nolan recently sent me a link to an article in *America*, the National Catholic Weekly newsmagazine.² Entitled: "Writing Home: Literary pilgrimages to the homes of Catholic authors," the article described the reaction of visitors when visiting the homes of Flannery O'Connor, Thomas Merton, Margaret Mitchell, and Graham Greene. Kerry Weber, who penned the story, related an account of a visitor to O'Connor's home in Milledgeville, Georgia. The burly man wept openly as he signed the guestbook. "This is embarrassing," he confessed, "but it's so meaningful." This story reminded me of the experience of many people when they visit Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's farm and home in Cross Creek. The author's words, beloved by many, literally come alive in front of the visitor. It is often said that Rawlings's descriptions of the Florida landscape make you feel like you are "right there." But, actually standing under a magnolia

tree in her yard transforms the "Magnolia Tree" passage from *Cross Creek* into a homily about the wonders and beauty of the *magnolia grandiflora* and the solace and joy that the author took from "its broad leaves, shining like dark polished jade." An ordinary, even ubiquitous tree is thus transformed into a sacred thing. Rawlings brings about this transformation over and over in her work. Members of the interpretative staff at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park frequently witness the power of the personal encounter with Rawlings that a visit to her home provides for visitors.

As the curator of her papers at the University of Florida, I am charged with providing access to the fruits of her creative energies, i.e. her manuscripts and correspondence. I have found that a similar kind of personal encounter with Rawlings can take place in the archive. Being able to handle her papers in their original form creates [see page 3

Announcements

The Friends of the MKR Farm is sponsoring a scrub walk, led by Anne Pierce, March 10, at 9:45 am. Meet in the Silver Glen Springs parking lot. RSVP (352) 466-3672.

The next Trustees Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 12, at 6 pm, at the Holiday Inn, 3600 SW 38th Avenue, Ocala, FL.

The XXV Annual MKR Conference will be held at the Hilton Ocala, 3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474. Phone: (352) 854-1400

Memberships expired on June 30. Please send dues to Mrs. Marilyn Walker, 7015 Red Bug Lake Road, Apt. 309, Oviedo, FL 32765. Address label shows due date.

MKR Officers

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25TH ANNUAL MKR CONFERENCE AT OCALA

The Society will be celebrating its 25th-year anniversary at Ocala. Highlights include the following:

- Panel Discussion that will address the future of Rawlings studies, featuring Rodger Tarr (Professor Emeritus, Illinois State University) Brent Kinser (Western Carolina University), John Lowe (Louisiana State University), and Veronica Makowsky (University of Connecticut)
- Drama performance, "Cross Roads," based on MKR's marriage to Norton Baskin.
- Panel Discussion on Florida writing today, led by UCF Professor Susan Hubbard, author of *The Society of S.*
- Boat trip on the Silver River and visit to the Silver River Cracker village and museum. Only 46 people will be able to go on the boats, so PLEASE sign up early (Friday afternoon, April 13, 1—5 pm). Sack lunches may be purchased and bus transportation will be provided.
- Tour of the Bridlewood Farm, owned by the Appleton family. Guide will be Tom Sweeney (Friday afternoon, April 13, 1—5 pm). Some easy walking will be required. Sack lunches may be purchased and bus transportation will be provided.
- Cocktail party and banquet, Friday evening, April 13. Guest speaker will be journalist and author Jeff Klinkenberg.
- Luncheon will be held at the Appleton Art Museum. Guest speaker will be Johnny Pohlers, who designed the Yearling Trail in the Big Scrub. He is tentatively scheduled to lead a walk on the Yearling Trail on Sunday morning, April 15.
- Trustees will be meeting at the Holiday Inn on Thursday evening, April 12. After the meeting, trustees will eat at the Asian Fusian Restaurant on the top floor of the Holiday Inn. Music jam, 10 pm, Thursday.

Conference Hotel

The conference hotel is the Hilton Ocala, located at exit on I-75. Cost of a room is \$90, plus taxes. Please make a reservation by March 24, in order to receive this special conference rate. When you call to make your reservation, mention that you are part of the Rawlings group.

Hilton Ocala, 3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474.
Phone: (352) 854-1400. Email: www.hiltonocala.com

HOMEWORK

Professor Rodger Tarr has assigned "**The Pelican's Shadow**" as the text he will elucidate at the conference. Anyone who does not do the homework will be sent to detention hall.



The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society: The First 25 Years by Kevin McCarthy.

Cost: \$10/copy--with all proceeds going to the cost of printing. It will be 20,000 words in length with over 200 photographs. It will cover each year of the MKR Society, going back to its formation in 1987, with a description of each year's meeting, significant events in the group's development, and remarks by several of the officers.

Hastings Art Festival Honors Rawlings

Sandra Birnhak reports on the December 3 Historic Hastings Art Festival in homage to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings:

"[It]was a huge success--one that was truly unique and one people will not soon forget. As a boutique festival the crowd draw was just over 500--it was truly a magical wonderland. Bill Jeter enjoyed 'viewing art, listening to period music, dining on authentic MKR fare.' And there were the wonderful artisans--from rustic furniture to honey and datil jellies, hand hewn birdhouses, red-birds in the trees (courtesy of Daisy),gorgeous decor (per Marjorie) in every artisan tent--decorated per the criteria--cloth & lace tablecloths--and plants of the season. Huge baskets of oranges were everywhere. We were delighted to see Bill & Deanne Jeter, and Daisy and I greeted Sally Baskin Hooker, David

Nolan and Jeannine Auth. The art was spectacular and the images of Marjorie were beautiful--so unique and creative. We wish you could have all been there!
Sandra & Daisy



First Place Winner:
Martha Mickens & Dog by S. Raphael-Vinci

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings *Newsletter*

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MKR Society Web Site

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